

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 686

By White

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Mr. Luke Dunkin for his extraordinary display of bravery and courage in saving the life of Robert Justice.

WHEREAS, it is fitting for this General Assembly to pause in its deliberations and pay tribute to those outstanding citizens who have risked their personal safety to save the life of a fellow human being; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy individual is Mr. Luke Dunkin of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, on October 30, 2001, Luke Dunkin was on a fishing trip at Wilson Lake in Lauderdale County, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, the winds on the lake that day were particularly strong, causing unusually high and forceful waves; and

WHEREAS, Luke Dunkin, while fishing along the bank, heard a strange sound muffled by the gusts of wind. The sound captured his attention and he began to scan the cold waters of Wilson Lake; and

WHEREAS, Luke Dunkin noticed a drink cooler floating along the bank, and he immediately suspected that a fishing boat had capsized; and

WHEREAS, his suspicion was confirmed when he spotted a man in a life jacket floating in the water near a boat; and

WHEREAS, without concern for his own safety, Luke Dunkin immediately plunged into the cold waters of Wilson Lake and swam to assist the helpless man; and

WHEREAS, as Luke Dunkin swam close to the boat he noticed two men in the water, Robert Justice, age 55, and Joe Newman, age 76. Mr. Justice had tied Mr. Newman to the boat, but before Luke Dunkin could render assistance, the rope snapped and Mr. Newman drifted into the current; Luke Dunkin quickly made his way to help Mr. Justice, aiding him in holding on to the side of the boat; and

WHEREAS, Luke Dunkin realized that it would be extremely difficult to lift Mr. Justice into the boat by himself so he attempted to call 911 on his cellular phone, however, he could not get a clear signal due to the strong winds, and the emergency dispatcher was also unable to pinpoint their location and could not send emergency vehicles; and

WHEREAS, Luke Dunkin quickly understood that he had to pull Mr. Justice into the boat in order to save his life; this task was extremely difficult due to the fact that Mr. Justice's clothes were heavily soaked, making him very heavy, and waves continued to crash into the boat, causing the small vessel to take on water; and

WHEREAS, in desperation, Luke Dunkin lowered the boat's trolling motor, which allowed Mr. Justice to grab on to the motor and pull himself closer; Luke then slowly pulled Mr. Justice into the boat; and

WHEREAS, Luke Dunkin hurriedly steered the vessel to shore and then dashed to his truck to obtain a blanket and a jacket to help warm Mr. Justice; and

WHEREAS, a resident of the area who witnessed the event notified the authorities and emergency vehicles arrived minutes later to provide medical treatment for Mr. Justice; and

WHEREAS, Luke Dunkin is the son of loving parents, Marty and Theresa Dunkin of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a recent graduate of Lawrence County High School, Luke Dunkin now attends the University of North Alabama in Florence; and

WHEREAS, Luke Dunkin's display of bravery, courage and compassion for his fellow human beings is a testament to the exceptional character that this young man possesses; and

WHEREAS, during this trying time in our nation's history, we look for those individuals who, through selfless action, inspire us to be better people and give us hope for the future, as they perpetuate the time-honored values of goodness and decency that we all hold dear; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee is fortunate to have one such exemplary citizen in Luke Dunkin and it is with great pride that we honor him today; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and commend Luke Dunkin of Lawrenceburg for his extraordinary display of bravery and courage in saving the life of Robert Justice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.